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Message Text

SECRET

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44
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 CCO-00 /026 W
---------- 055417
O R 201539Z JAN 76
FM AMEMBASSY AMMAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6680
INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY CAIRO

S E C R E T AMMAN 0305

EXDIS

DEPARTMENT PASS SECRETARY'S PARTY

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, LE, XF
SUBJECT: TALK WITH KING -- LEBANON

REF: STATE 013817, BEIRUT 0365, CAIRO 0214, STATE 013832

SUMMARY: KING DEEPLY DISTRUBED AND PREOCCUPIED WITH DETERIORATING SITUATION IN LEBANON. HAS BEEN IN TOUCH WITH SYRIA AND EXPECTS TO VISIT DAMASCUS AND SEE ASAD TOMORROW ABOUT PROBLEM. SAW SOME HOPEFUL SIGNS THAT SYRIANS AND OTHER PUTTING PRESSURE ON KARAME TO STAY. SAID HE THOUGHT FRANGIEH WOULD ACCEPT SYRIAN FIVE POINTS ADDED THAT CHAMOUN WAS BEING PARTICULARLY DIFFICULT AFTER PAST COOPERATION WITH SYRIAN AND WOULD TALK WITH ASAD AND CONSIDER TRYING TO CONTACT CHAMOUN IN LIGHT OF HIS CONVERSATIONS II DAMASCUS. KING DISTURBED BY RUMORS OF ISRAELI REENFORCEMENT IN THE NORTH AND BY PUBLIC ATTITUDE OF CAIRO WHICH SEEMS TO HIM TO BE TRYING TO OUTDO SYRIANS IN SUPPORT OF PALESTINAIANS. KING ASKED IF SECRETARY HAD ANY THOUGHTS FOR HIM PRIOR TO HIS MEETING JANUARY 21 WITH ASAD. END SUMMARY.

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1. JANUARY 20 DISCUSSION WITH KING HUSSEIN FOCUSED

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MAINLY ON LEBANON. HE TOLD ME THAT YESTERDAY HAD BEEN
A TRYING DAY. CALBES HAD COME IN FROM BEIRUT, DAMASCUS
AND ELSEWHERE IN THE AREA PAINTING A VERY CONFUSED,
DETERIORATING SITUATION. LATE IN THE DAY HE HAD GOTTEN
IN TOUCH WITH DAMASCUS AND SUGGESTED A MEETING WITH
PRESIDENT ASAD. ASAD HAD NOT REPLEID UNTIL THE SMALL
HOURS OF THIS MORNING AND MEETING IS NOW SET FOR AROUND
NOON, JANUARY 21.

2. IN THE ABSENCE OF RESPONSE TO MY REQUEST, (STATE 013832 RECEIVED
HERE AFTER MY MEETING) I DID NOT USE BACKGROUND CABLE DIRECTLY
(STATE 013817), BUT DID REVIEW WITH
KING A NUMBER OF THE DEVELOPEMNTS DISCUSSED THERE AS A
SERIES OF MY PERSONAL THOUGHTS ON THE SITUATION.

3. HE SAID HE APPRECIATED THE REVIEW. HE HIMSELF HAD
HAD A NUMBER OF DIFFERENT REPORTS WHICH HE WANTED TO
GO OVER WITH ME.
4. FROM LEBANON HE HAD HEARD THAT THERE WERE CONTINUING
EFFORTS BY THE SYRIANS AND OTHERS TO BRING KARAME BACK
INTO COMMUNICATION WITH FRANJIEH AND TO KEEP THE PRESSURE ON
KARAME TO WITHDRAW HIS RESIGNATION. FURTHER KING SAID THAT
HE THOUGHT THAT FRANGIEH WAS NOW AT THE POINT OF HIMSELF
ACCEPTING THE SYRIAN FIVE POINTS, BUT HE THOUGHT THAT
CHAMOUN WAS THE HOLDOUT. I USED THIS POOORTUNITY TO
RAISE WITH HIM THE HOPE EXPRESSED IN AMBASSADOR GODLEY'S
CABLE (BEIRUT 0365) THAT HE COULD COMMUNICATE SOME OF HIS OWN
IDEAS DIRECTLY TO CHAMOUN. THE KING SAID HE HAD BEEN IN TOUCH WITH
CHAMOUN AND WOULD TRY TO DO SO AGAIN, BUT WOULD WAIT BEFORE
GETTING IN TOUCH AGAIN UNTIL HE SEES ASAD
TOMMORROW TO SEE WHAT THEY CAN WORK OUT TOGETHER ON A
COORDINATED BASIS.

5. FROM DAMASCUS KING HAS HAD REPORTS THAT THERE ARE
INCREASING NUMBERS OF SAIQA FORCES CROSSING THE BORDER
INTO LEBANON.THIS WORRIES HIM AND HE HAS CONTINUED TO
COUNSEL RESTRAINT ON THE PART OF THE SYRIANS. I ASKED
HIM IF HE COULD CONFIRM THE RATHER IMPROBABLE REPORT
PUT OUT BY CHAMOUN THIS MORNING THAT LARGE NUMBERS
OF WELL AND HEAVILY ARMED "SYRIAN" FORCES HAD CROSSED OVER INTO
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LEBANON. HE SAID NO HE COULD NOT AND RATHE DOUBTED
THE EXTREME ASPECTS OF THE REPORT, BUT WAS NOT SO SURE
FROM HIS OWN EXPERIENCE IN 1970 THAT THE SYRIANS AND
THE PLA TOGETHER COULD NOT FIELD SOME REALLY SIGNIFICANT
NUMBERS OF TROOPS -- HE MENTIONED BRIGADES. HE ALSO
SAID THAT PLA AND SYRIANS WOULD HAVE NO TECHNICAL OR PERSONNEL
PROBLEMS OPERATING ARMORED VEHICLES OR ARTILLERY INTO LEBANON.
BUT HE ADDED HE HAD NO WAY OF CONFIRMING IT, BUT HE SUSPECTED

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THAT SYRIANS HAD MOVED MORE FORCES INTO BEBANON IN LAST
SEVERAL DAYS.

6. WITH REGARD TO CAIRO, KING SAID HE IS INCREASINGLY
DISTURBED BY PUBLIC STATEMENTS WHICH SEEM TO BE DESIGNED
TO BE MORE RADICAL IN THEIR SUPPORT OF PALESTINIANS
THAN THE SYRIANS. HE DESPARIED OF A COMPETITION
DEVELOPING IN THIS AREA. I WAS ABLE ALSO TO GIVE HIM
A VERY BRIEF FILL IN ON THE MOOD IN CAIRO EARLIER THIS
MONTH ON THE BASIS OF CAIRO 0214. HE SAID HE APPRECIATED
THIS VERY MUCH AS IT ADDED A NEW PERSPECTIVE. SINCE
THE JORDANIANS ARE KNOWN NOT TO BE VERY FOND OF
FAHMY IN ANY EVENT, HE ASKED IF THE FOREIGN MINISTER
WAS IN CHARGE OF LEBANESE QUESIOJS (I DID NOT MENTION NAMES.) I
ONLY INDICATED IN RESPONSE THAT HE SEEMED TO BE ONE OF THE
EGYPTIANS TAKING A NEGATIVE POSITION TOWARD FURTHER IN-
VOLVEMENT-- INCLUDING ARAB EFFORTS TO SOLVE THE
CONTROVERSY.
FROM TEL AVIV KING SAYS THERE ARE RUMORS REACHING HIM
OF MILITARY MOVEMENTS IN NORTHERN ISRAEL. HE CHARACTERIZED
THESE AS ONLY "RUMORS". HE SAID SO MUCH OF THE AREA IS
STIRRING WITH RUMORS AT THE MOMENT THAT HE FINDS IT
DIFFICULT TO SORT OUT THE RELIABLE REPORTS.

7. KING SAID HE HOPES HE CAN BE A MODERATING AND
HELPFUL INFLUENCE IN SYRIAN TOMORROW. HE ASKED IF
SECRETARY HAD ANY THOUGHTS OR IDEAS THAT HE COULD BEAR
IN MIND WHEN TALKING TO ASAD AND SAID HE WOULD BE GRATEFUL FOR
ANYTHING WE MIGHT HAVE TO PASS ON. I SAID I WOULD STAY IN CLOSE
TOUCH AND LET HIM KNOW.

8. ACTION REQUESTED: IF THERE IS ANY MESSAGE FOR THE
KING, IT SHOULD BE TIMED TO ARRIVE PRIOR TO HIS DEPARTURE
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FOR DAMASCUS BETWEEN 10:00AM AND 11:00 AM JANUARY 21
LOCAL TIME.
PICKERING

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED SECRETARY'S PARTY.

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